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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ROME 001982

SIPDIS

FROM U.S. MISSION IN ROME

STATE FOR A/S/PRM, PRM/P, AF/S AND IO/D
USAID FOR A/AID, AA/DCHA, AA/AFR, DCHA/FFP, DCHA/OFDA
USDA/FAS FOR U/S PENN AND MCHAMBLISS
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NAIROBI FOR REDSO AND DCHA/OFDA
GENEVA FOR RMA AND NKYLOH/USAID
BRUSSELS FOR KFULLER AND KDEBLAW
PRETORIA FOR USDA/FAS HELM
USUN FOR LSHESTACK
NSC FOR JDWORKEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [EAGR](#) [AORC](#) [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [EAGR](#) [AORC](#) [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [WFP](#) [UN](#) [UNSC](#) [EAID](#) [WFP](#) [UN](#) [UNSC](#)

SUBJECT: UN INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE STATEMENT ON
GROWING HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN THE SOUTHERN AFRICA REGION

REF: (A) ROME 1895

SUMMARY

1. THE UN'S INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE (IASC), WHICH MET IN ROME APRIL 9-10, EXPRESSED ITS CONCERN THAT A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES WITHIN SOUTHERN AFRICA WILL REQUIRE A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE IN 2002. THE PRESENT FOOD SECURITY SITUATION IN THE REGION IS ADJUDGED THE WORST SINCE 1992. THE IASC EXPRESSED ITS COMMITMENT TO WORK WITH AFFECTED GOVERNMENTS AND REGIONAL PARTNERS ON MULTI-SECTORAL ASSESSMENTS OF NEEDS, THE DESIGN OF APPROPRIATE RESPONSE STRATEGIES AND IN ENSURING EFFECTIVE COORDINATION OF ALL INTERVENTIONS INCLUDING LOGISTICS RELATED TO THE DELIVERY OF URGENTLY NEEDED RELIEF CARGO. THE COMMITTEE ALSO CALLED UPON THE INTERNATIONAL DONOR COMMUNITY TO HELP PREVENT THE CURRENT CRISIS FROM BECOMING A
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HUMANITARIAN DISASTER AND EMPHASIZED THAT, WITH A PROMPT AND VIGOROUS RESPONSE FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, THIS CRISIS CAN BE AVERTED. END SUMMARY.

BACKGROUND

2. THE UN'S INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE (IASC) IS COMPRISED OF UN MEMBER AGENCIES: FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION (FAO); UN OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS (OCHA); UN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (UNDP); UN POPULATION FUND (UNFPA); UN CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF); UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR); WORLD FOOD PROGRAM (WFP); AND THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO). STANDING INVITEES INCLUDE: INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS (ICRC); INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF VOLUNTARY AGENCIES (ICVA); INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT (IFRC); INTER-ACTION; INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM); STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE (SCHR); UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (UNHCHR); AND THE WORLD BANK).

3. WHILE MEETING IN ROME APRIL 9-10, THE IASC FOCUSED INTER ALIA ON THE EMERGING HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. IT EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES IN THIS REGION WILL REQUIRE A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE IN 2002. THE PRESENT FOOD SECURITY SITUATION IN THE REGION IS ADJUDGED THE WORST SINCE 1992. FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE PRESENT CRISIS ARE NUMEROUS AND VARY FROM COUNTRY TO COUNTRY. THEY INCLUDE: DROUGHT, FLOODS,
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DISRUPTIONS TO COMMERCIAL FARMING, DEPLETION OF STRATEGIC GRAIN RESERVES, POOR ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE, FOREIGN EXCHANGE SHORTAGES AND DELAYS IN THE TIMELY IMPORTATION OF MAIZE. SIGNIFICANT INCREASES IN THE PRICE OF MAIZE HAVE UNDERMINED ACCESS TO FOOD FOR LARGE SEGMENTS OF THE POPULATION WITHIN THE REGION.

4. THE EMERGING CRISIS IS COMPOUNDED BY THE HIGH PREVALENCE OF HIV/AIDS. INADEQUATE FOOD AVAILABILITY AND CONSUMPTION PLACES AN EVEN GREATER STRAIN ON THOSE AFFECTED BY HIV/AIDS AND THE FAMILY MEMBERS STRUGGLING TO CARE FOR THEM. HIV/AIDS INCREASES HOUSEHOLD VULNERABILITY TO FOOD INSECURITY BY DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTING WORKING AGE PEOPLE. IT REDUCES THE AMOUNT AND QUALITY OF LAND CULTIVATED AS WELL AS INCOMES

AND PURCHASING POWER FOR THOSE EMPLOYED IN OTHER SECTORS. IT ALSO ADDS TO THE DISEASE BURDEN (TUBERCULOSIS, MALARIA AND OTHER INFECTIOUS DISEASES) THAT THE POPULATION FACES ALONG WITH THE FOOD INSECURITY.

FAO/WFP JOINT CROP AND FOOD SUPPLY ASSESSMENT MISSIONS

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ACTION PRM-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AF-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00
	WHA-00	SRPP-00	EB-00	EUR-00	UTED-00	TEDE-00	INR-00
	IO-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OES-01	OIC-02	TEST-00	DRL-02
	SAS-00	/005W					

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P 230641Z APR 02
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3379
INFO EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY BERN
USDA FAS WASHDC 2103
USEU BRUSSELS 2634
USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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15. ALTHOUGH THE APPROACHING HARVEST SEASON (APRIL-JUNE) SHOULD PROVIDE SHORT-TERM RELIEF FOR SOME OF THE 2.7 MILLION PERSONS CURRENTLY AFFECTED, MANY VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS WILL CONTINUE TO REQUIRE EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE. FOR MANY VULNERABLE POPULATIONS, ASSETS HAVE ALREADY BEEN DEPLETED AND COPING STRATEGIES EXHAUSTED. THE FOOD SECURITY SITUATION IN THE SECOND HALF OF 2002 AND INTO EARLY 2003 IS EXPECTED TO SIGNIFICANTLY WORSEN IN MALAWI, ZAMBIA AND ZIMBABWE. HOUSEHOLDS IN POCKETS OF LESOTHO, MOZAMBIQUE AND SWAZILAND ARE ALSO EXPERIENCING SERIOUS FOOD SHORTAGES. AMONG THOSE AFFECTED ARE 125,000 REFUGEES IN MALAWI AND ZAMBIA WHO DEPEND UPON FOOD AID FOR THEIR SURVIVAL. NOTE: AS PER THE IASC, THE 117,000 REFUGEES IN ZAMBIA HAVE ONLY RECEIVED HALF RATIONS DURING THE FIRST QUARTER OF THIS YEAR DUE TO GAPS IN RESOURCING. END NOTE.

16. JOINT FAO/WFP ASSESSMENT MISSIONS FOCUSING ON CROP PRODUCTION, ACCESS TO FOOD AND OTHER ESSENTIAL NEEDS, SUCH AS NUTRITION AND HEALTH, ARE PRESENTLY UNDERWAY (APRIL-MAY)
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IN LESOTHO, MALAWI, MOZAMBIQUE, SWAZILAND, ZAMBIA, MOZAMBIQUE, ANGOLA AND ZIMBABWE - TO QUANTIFY THE DIMENSIONS OF THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS BOTH WITHIN INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES AND REGIONALLY. IASC STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF MONITORING EARLY WARNING INFORMATION RELATED TO A POSSIBLE EL NINO "EVENT." IF ANOTHER MAJOR WEATHER PHENOMENON WERE TO OCCUR, ERRATIC RAINFALL AND OTHER CLIMATIC SHOCKS COULD FURTHER UNDERMINE CROP PRODUCTION AND FOOD SECURITY.

17. WFP HAS BEEN GIVEN THE LEAD IN CONSULTING WITH AGENCIES IN THE REGION REGARDING THE CRISIS. FURTHER, IASC DECIDED THAT THERE WOULD BE A UNITED NATIONS-ORGANIZED MEETING IN THE REGION IN LATE MAY TO REVIEW THE FINDINGS OF THE FAO/WFP CROP ASSESSMENT MISSIONS AND TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE ISSUANCE OF A UN CONSOLIDATED APPEAL (CAP) FOR THE REGION IS WARRANTED.

18. FINALLY, IASC REPEATED ITS COMMITMENT TO WORK WITH AFFECTED GOVERNMENTS AND REGIONAL PARTNERS ON MULTI-SECTORAL ASSESSMENTS OF NEEDS, THE DESIGN OF APPROPRIATE RESPONSE STRATEGIES AND IN ENSURING EFFECTIVE COORDINATION OF ALL INTERVENTIONS, INCLUDING LOGISTICS, RELATED TO THE DELIVERY OF URGENTLY NEEDED RELIEF CARGO. THE COMMITTEE ALSO CALLED UPON THE INTERNATIONAL DONOR COMMUNITY TO HELP PREVENT THE CURRENT CRISIS FROM BECOMING A HUMANITARIAN DISASTER. THE IASC EMPHASIZED THAT, WITH PROMPT RESPONSE FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, THIS CRISIS CAN BE AVERTED.

COMMENT

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19. THERE WAS GENERAL IASC-CONSENSUS THAT SOUTHERN AFRICA WAS BEING IMPACTED BY A MULTI-SECTORAL HUMANITARIAN CRISIS AND NOT JUST A PROBLEM OF FOOD SHORTAGES. IN ADDITION TO TIMELY PROVISION OF FOOD, NON-FOOD REQUIREMENTS ALSO NEEDED TO BE FOCUSED ON. THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT THE UN AGENCIES ARE NOW SERIOUSLY ENGAGED IN ASSESSING THE MAGNITUDE OF THE PROBLEM, COMMITTED TO WORKING WITH ALL APPROPRIATE PARTNERS, AND IMBUED WITH A SENSE OF URGENCY. HEILEMAN

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